



RHODE ISLAND WORKING FAMILIES PARTY

May 4th, 2021

Chairman Abney and members of the Committee,

Rhode Island Working Families Party supports Rep. Cassar's bill, H-5789, to strengthen our paid family leave program in Rhode Island.

Rhode Island's Temporary Caregiver Insurance program is an achievement to be proud of. It was one of the first of its kind in the country. This bill strengthens the program to make it more accessible to the families that need it most and to include more workers and caregiver relationships.

Because TCI only provides salary replacement for a portion of the salary it can be hard to take time off for the lowest income employees. This bill meaningfully increases the wage replacement to 90% for the lowest wage workers and to 75% for those earning slightly more. And it expands the number of weeks available to 12 weeks from 4 weeks.

This bill also creates a process for including self-employed Rhode Islanders. And it allows employees to take time off to care for family members including grandchildren, siblings, and anyone for whom the worker is responsible for arranging care.

In the time since we passed TCI in Rhode Island our neighbor states have been advancing and have moved ahead of us in allowing for family care. Massachusetts and Connecticut now allow for 12 weeks of time off to care for family with higher wage replacement.

Our TCI law was pioneering, but it needs to be updated so we don't leave Rhode Island families behind. This bill does just that. We urge the Committee to pass it.

Thank you,

Georgia Hollister Isman
Rhode Island Working Families